

CLAIMS

We Claim:

- 5 1. A computer-implemented method of refining a decision-making process based on a collection of data indicating a state, the method comprising:
 defining a plurality of discrete executable directives, wherein the discrete executable directives comprise one or more directives operable to perform one or more queries on the collection of data, one or more analysis directives operable to
10 diagnose a problem indicated by the state based at least on information derived from results of the queries, and one or more distribution directives operable to distribute a diagnosis of the problem and a user interface element indicating a possible reaction of a decision-maker to the diagnosis; and
 responsive to activation of the user interface element by a decision-maker,
15 recording the decision-maker's reaction to the diagnosis.
2. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the method of claim 1.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the collection of data indicates a state of an organization and the decision-making process is related to the organization.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the diagnosis comprises an indication of a root cause of the problem.
- 25 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the diagnosis comprises a recommendation for resolving the problem.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the diagnosis comprises a course of action for resolving the problem.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
5 distributing with a diagnosis of the problem a presentation of information indicating the problem, wherein the decision-maker can drill down to details not shown in the presentation of information.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein the directives encapsulate their
10 respective logic.

9. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
providing access to interim results generated by one of the directives.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein the collection of data indicates a
15 financial state of an organization.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
combining the executable directives into an executable sequence for
20 automatic execution; and
responsive to execution of the sequence, presenting the user interface element to a decision-maker.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to present
25 an identification of a root cause of the problem.

13. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to present recommendation to resolve the problem.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to present a course of action to resolve the problem.

15. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to monitor whether the decision-maker has acknowledged the problem.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to monitor whether the decision-maker has committed to completing a recommended course of action.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to monitor whether the decision-maker is engaging in a particular course of action to resolve the problem.

18. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence is operable to evaluate a reaction of the decision-maker to the problem.

19. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence comprises a gate.

20. The method of claim 11 wherein the sequence comprises a conditional branch.

21. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
displaying representations of the discrete executable directives in a computer user interface for arbitrary assembly into an executable sequence.

22. The method of claim 1 wherein the discrete executable directives form a metasequence.

23. A computer-implemented method of refining a budgetary decision-making process related to an organization based on a collection of data indicating budgets and expenses related to cost centers, the method comprising:

5 defining a plurality of discrete executable directives, wherein the discrete executable directives comprise one or more directives operable to perform one or more queries on the collection of data to generate budget and expense information for the cost centers, one or more analysis directives operable to determine whether a cost center is on track to overrun its budget based at least on information derived from results of the queries, and one or more distribution directives operable to
10 distribute a notification to a cost center manager responsible for the cost center indicating the overrun and a user interface element indicating a possible reaction of the cost center manager to the overrun; and

responsive to activation of the user interface element by the cost center manager, recording the cost center's reaction to the overrun.

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24. A computer-based environment for refining a decision-making process based on a collection of data, the environment comprising:

means for executing a set of discrete executable processing directives to identify a problem based on the collection of data;
20 means for distributing an indication of the identified problem to a decision-maker; and
means for determining the decision-maker's reaction to the identified problem.